

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for retrieving and storing packages, comprising:

depositing a package for a registered user in one of a plurality of access controlled storage units at a delivery node site; and

notifying the registered user that a package is available for retrieval at said pre-determined delivery node site.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising authenticating delivery service personnel at said predetermined delivery node site prior to providing access to said storage units.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein authenticating said delivery service personnel comprises validating an account number and corresponding identification number.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising entering a customer account number in a user station.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising validating said customer account number.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising requesting a storage unit for deposit of said package.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein requesting a storage unit further comprises selecting a storage unit size.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising requesting package retrieval.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising authenticating said registered user.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein authenticating said registered user comprises validating account number of said registered user and corresponding personal identification number.

11. The method of claim 9 further comprising validating balance of registered user's account.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising opening the storage unit that contains said package in accordance with said  
5 account validation.

13. The method of claim 1 further comprising recording transaction for billing purposes.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein recording said transaction for billing purposes comprises recording date and  
10 time of package deposit and pickup, and recording size of storage unit.

15. The method of claim 2 further comprising entering a unit number in a user station.

16. The method of claim 15 further comprising selecting  
15 package recipient from a package recipient list.

17. A multi-user package retrieval and storage system, comprising:

one or more delivery node systems having a plurality of storage units and a locker controller for controlling access to  
20 said storage units; and

a back office system in electrical communication with said locker controllers.

18. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 17 wherein said one or more delivery node systems further  
25 comprise a user station for interfacing with users of said system.

19. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 18 wherein said user station comprises a proximity card reader for authenticating users.

20. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 18 wherein said user station comprises a keypad as an input device for users.

21. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 18 wherein said user station comprises a display for displaying messages to users.

22. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 17 wherein said one or more delivery node systems further comprise a security system.

23. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 17 wherein said one or more delivery node systems electrically communicate with said back office system via a communication network.

24. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 23 wherein said communication network comprises a wide area network.

25. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 24 wherein said wide area network comprises the Internet.

26. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 17 wherein said back office system comprises a router for managing incoming and outgoing traffic over said communication network.

27. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 17 wherein said back office system comprises one or more transaction servers for processing transactions with registered users.

28. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 17 wherein said back office system comprises one or more database servers for storing transaction activity and maintaining register user records.

29. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 17 wherein said back office system comprises one or more

web servers for hosting a web site that allows communication with users via the Internet.

30. The multi-user package retrieval and storage system of claim 17 wherein said one or more delivery node systems comprise  
5 one or more remote delivery node systems and one or more fixed delivery node systems.